

## THE MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER

I HAVE EVER MET

*By*  
John W Aird, M.D.

*Practiced in  
Heber a  
short time.*

As a proud member of the Emeritus Club of the University of Utah I am very happy to comply with the request to do what I can to keep alive and pass on, if that be possible, the inspiration, stimulation and uplift that Dr. John R. Park gave me.

I presume that there are comparatively few of us still living who had the good fortune to know and feel directly the stimulating influence of that eminently successful teacher. I have a strong feeling that those of us who are still alive as well as the thousands who have passed on to the great unknown, all have, or has had, the same warm feeling, love and esteem for Dr. Park that I have. However, with many it may well be in a lesser degree; as I, no doubt, am the one who needed his assistance the most, being the "dumbest" of them all.

I now wish that I were a writer. Lacking that accomplishment, I know of no better way to convey to you young folks what Dr. Park has meant to me, than to briefly touch upon my early life and my professional career.

As a child it was difficult for me to learn. That difficulty increased as time went on; due, as I later viewed it, to some of my early teachers having little or no knowledge of psychology and even less of the dynamic power of suggestion. Owing to my stupidity my teachers would occasionally, if not oftener, become impatient. One of them occasionally told me that I could not learn and that I never would amount to anything. I took it for granted she knew. No doubt it was on that account that I developed what now might well be termed, an overwhelming inferiority complex, which added greatly to my difficulties.

About the time that I was coming into the second half of my teen years my inferiority complex began to leave me; but it was not until I entered the University of Deseret, now the University of Utah, and came under the stimulating and helpful influence of John R. Park, M.D. that it left me almost entirely.

---It was not long after I entered the University that Dr. Park asked me in to his office. He began by saying that he feared I was not concentrating properly on my studies. He was not long in finding out the essence of my past life. With that knowledge he readily sensed what my difficulties were. He then proceeded to give me a lecture on concentration, telling me I should give my undivided attention to the subject in hand, forgetting self and all else about me. I should disregard all noises, and any conversation that might be going on. In other words, I should become oblivious to everything but the one thing. He then went on to tell me that he was sure I could, by sustained effort coupled with proper concentration, accomplish anything that was humanly possible to accomplish. Did that sound good to me?

Following that inspiring interview a new world seemed to open up to me. From that time on I dearly loved Dr. Park. My classmates and all those with whom I came in contact, were more interesting and lovable. The contrast between my early life and my new life was dazzling, astounding, staggering; or what term should I use?

THE BIRMINGHAM JOURNAL

U. S. AIR FORCE

1 however, that there are comparatively few of us still living who had the good fortune to know and feel directly the motivating influence of that eminently successful teacher. I have a strong feeling that those of us who are still alive, will be the thousands who have reacted on to the great influence of him as the thousands who were living love and reason for his sake that I have, however, with many of his well-to-do disciples regarded as I no doubt, among the one who needed the assistance the most, being the "humblest" or "meanest".

I now wish that I were a writer. Looking back retrospectively, I know of no better way so far as to you young folks than to look back to me, and to tell me of your life and my professional career.

...I developed what now might be termed an overwhelming inferiority complex, which so weighed on me that I took to my bed, and during the time I was in that condition I learned that I could not learn and that I never would amount to anything. I took to my bed, and during the time I was in that condition I learned that I could not learn and that I never would amount to anything. I took to my bed, and during the time I was in that condition I learned that I could not learn and that I never would amount to anything.

14-00000

...I was not long in finding out the answer to my question. With that knowledge he readily agreed that my difficulties were... He then proceeded to give me a lecture on concentration, telling me I should give my undivided attention to the job at hand, forgetting self and all else about me. I am a little person all right, but my conversation that night he spoke of... in other words, I should become oblivious to everything but the one thing. He then went on to tell me that was what I could, by constant effort, acquire with proper concentration, concentration was... that was humanly possible to accomplish. The first lesson was to me.

Following that incident, I received a new assignment to open up the  
from that time on I clearly found Dr. Frank. My assignment and all those with whom I  
have in contact, were very interesting and enjoyable. The connection between my early  
and my new life was excellent, enjoyable, and very interesting. I should like to say that I was

Dr. Park's interest in me did not lag. We became life long friends. I fancy that few if any, of his many students experienced the same thrills that I did. I attribute whatever success I have attained largely to John R. Park, M. D.

Prior to retiring five years ago I had practiced medicine and surgery -- mainly surgery -- for fifty years. As I enjoyed a large practice I feel that I must have served well those who came under my care. My records and case histories show a low mortality in major surgery, which compares favorably with those of the best surgeons in this or any other land.

As I had little or no time for research work there is no doubt but that it was my reputation, professional and lay, that won my membership in the American College of Surgeons and space in such biographical publications as the various Who's Who in Medicine and Surgery, ~~and~~ "The National Cyclopedia of American Biography" and the "Biographical Encyclopedia of the World".

To you young students who are now attending and to those who may hereafter attend my beloved Alma-Mater, as well as to all my dear grand children; please bear in mind that it is easy to learn if you concentrate properly. Also bear in mind that you can do anything that anyone else has done. Choose for your life's work that which you feel you are best adapted for, and that which you think will afford you the greatest satisfaction and most pleasure; keeping the \$ sign well in the background as Dr. Park advised me. The dollar will take care of itself if you are happy in your work.

If at any time you become the least bit discouraged, stop and think of that well known friend of mine -- N C Hanks, Lecturer and Author -- who to me, is another unforgettable character. He, as you may know, lost his hands and eyes as a young man, and later obtained an education by attending two or three of our best Universities. He travels alone and has crossed our continent many times and has given his interesting and stimulating lectures in some foreign countries. In thinking of him your trivial difficulties will likely vanish; or if they do not you should use them as he did his -- stepping stones to success.

*1907 - before he  
went to Brown  
Urb*

Dr. Park's interest in me did not last. We became life long friends. I fancy that few if any of the many students experienced the same thrill that I did. I attribute whatever success I have attained largely to John R. Park, M.D.

Prior to entering the medical profession I had practiced medicine and surgery mainly surgery -- for fifty years. As I progressed in my profession I feel that I must have served well those who came under my care. My patients and cases histories show few mistakes in major surgery, which demonstrates largely with those of the best surgeons in this or any other land.

As I had little or no time for research work there is no doubt but that it was my reputation, professional and lay, that won my membership in the American College of Surgeons and space in such professional publications as the American Medical Association and Surgery, and "The National Encyclopedia of American Biography".

To my young students who are now attending and to those who may hereafter attend my beloved Alma Mater, as well as all my dear friends, I feel that it is my duty to say to them it is my duty to say to them that you can be anything that anyone else can do. Success for your life's work that which you feel you are best suited for -- and that which you think will bring you the greatest satisfaction and most pleasure. Keeping the 4 high well in the background as Dr. Park advised me. The dollar will take care of itself if you are happy in your work.

It is at any time you become the least bit dissatisfied, stop and think of that well known friend of mine -- W. D. Feltus, the "Trust" and "Growth" -- who is now in another unenviable position. He, as you may know, had a wife and four or five young children, and later obtained an education by attending two or three of our best hospitals. He traveled alone and has overcome his constant worry and has given his patients and attending lectures in some foreign countries. In talking to him your critical difficulties will likely vanish or lessen and you should see how as he did me -- stopping a moment to breathe.